

Tour de Tapas: A culinary journey through Europe

What's on the menu?

By **ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON**



Celebrating the flavors of Spain, France, and Italy, Tour de Tapas offers a mini-European culinary tour of small plates and sips in the heart of La Mesa.



This charming new restaurant is a welcome and popular addition to the village.

"We don't try to do everything fancy, we try to do it well. We want good flavors and culinary traditions," said owner Gerald Torres. At Tour de Tapas, every meal is an adventure and every plate tells a story.

Torres, who loves what he does, also owns City Taco next door.

"I've been in the business my whole life. I started as a waiter and worked my way up to restaurant owner and all the steps in between," Torres added.

You will find both cold and hot plates on the menu as well as soups, entrees, and desserts.

Some cold plates offered include an Heirloom Caprese Salad with heirloom tomatoes and a

walnut pesto sauce. Representing Spain, a Fraise Salade features Spanish Serrano cured ham and caramelized walnuts.

If you enjoy mussels, try the Moules à la Crème et Au Vin Blanc, fresh mussels in a creamy white wine and fresh herb sauce. Other hot plates include Chicken Cordon Bleu, Calamari Fritti, and Octopus-Pulpo con Chistorra. Patatas Bravas is the most popular Spanish tapa and consists of poached potatoes smothered in a semi-spicy sauce.

Another specialty is the Spanish Paella filled with Spanish rice, a variety of seafood, and Chistorra sausage.

Entrees include Sautéed Rockfish, Squid filled with octopus and serrano ham, or sautéed salmon.

Delicious desserts round out the tasty menu.

Crepes Suzette with caramel, orange liquor and orange supreme is supreme. Spain is represented with Crema Catalana, which is a custard with lemon zest and torched brown sugar. Top your dessert off with a glass of Port-style wine.



Heirloom Caprese Salad and Crepes Suzette - one with port wine and one with a white wine - are among your choices at Tour de Tapas. (Photos by Robin Dohrn-Simpson)

Torres even brought his friend, who spent his career in wine sales, out of retirement to be his wine sommelier. Consequently, the wine list is well-curated and features unique wines from France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and California. Their goal is to have unique wines at affordable prices, for you to try something different and not break the bank trying some wines.

Enjoy Tour de Tapas for Happy Hour daily (except Monday) and

receive 15% off any wine by the glass or bottle, beer or their Sangria. Hours differ; make sure you check the website for actual times.

Make sure you have reservations so you won't be disappointed.

Call (619) 391-3396. For details of the restaurant as well as a current menu go to: tourde-tapas.com/

Located at 8323 La Mesa Blvd, hours are Tuesday through Sunday 4 p.m. -10 p.m.



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